



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SAN ANTONIO MAN RECEIVES LIFE IN FEDERAL PRISON;
WIFE, 11 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON ON DRUG CHARGES**

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced that a San Antonio man was sentenced to life in federal prison on narcotics charges; his wife, 11 years imprisonment.

Yesterday in Del Rio, Texas, United States District Judge Alia Ludlum sentenced 29-year-old Ismael Orlando Lira, to life in federal prison for operating a continuing criminal enterprise. Judge Ludlum also sentenced Ismael Lira to concurrent federal prison terms of 480 months for each of three counts of possessing more than 100 kilograms of marijuana with intent to distribute, 960 months for distributing marijuana to a minor, and 240 months for each of two counts of money laundering. In addition, Judge Ludlum ordered that Lira pay a \$7,000 fine.

Judge Ludlum also sentenced 24 year-old Tina Lira to concurrent 11-year federal prison terms for conspiring to smuggle over 1,000 kilograms of marijuana and each of three counts of possessing more than 100 kilograms of marijuana with intent to distribute. Tina Lira was also fined \$4,000 and ordered to be placed under supervised release for a period of five years after completing her prison term.

On December 14, 2005, a jury found that Ismael Lira engaged in a continuing criminal enterprise and conspired with others, including his wife, to possess with intent to distribute more than 1,000 kilograms of marijuana. The trial evidence showed that Mr. Lira hired others to smuggle loads of marijuana from Del Rio to San Antonio, Austin, Houston and Dallas. The loads of marijuana ranged from 230 to 1,050 pounds each. One witness testified that Mr. Lira delivered between 15,000 and 25,000 pounds of marijuana to him over an 18-month period beginning in early 2001.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). John A. Peralta, former Assistant United States Attorney along with Assistant United States Attorney Jeremy Sibert prosecuted this case on behalf of the government.

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